Orgen Tunggal - one type of wedding entertainment music in Minangkabau.

Written by Nisaul Aulia

For about 30 years the *Orgen Tunggal* (Single Keyboard) has been well known in Minangkabau. It is used to play entertaining music using a combination of the keyboard and sound equipment. Actually *Orgen Tunggal* music is also known to all of the Indonesian people, but in each region the name of the performances changes e.g. *Electone Tunggal* or *Keyboard Tunggal*.

In Indonesia (and especially in West Sumatra) of the *Orgen Tunggal* become popular over a long period of time. About 25 years ago it was just one type of music used to entertain people. One group invited by a village youth organization would go round the village and play for the people. Everyone who wanted to see the show had to buy a ticket and all of the money earned was shared equally between the village (e.g. for infrastructure development) and half for the group.

At first *Orgen Tunggal* was performed in a public-oriented places designed for entertainment nowadays – because of cultural and social change – this music has already entered other cultural ceremonies such as the *Baralek Kawin* (Minangkabau Wedding Ceremony). There are several reason for this: firstly the cost of the *Orgen Tunggal* group is much less than the cost of inviting a group playing traditional music. Secondly, *Orgen Tunggal* became a new, alternative entertainment for people (they consider it as one of the popular, modern music). Indeed *Orgen Tunggal* is very interesting for people because it’s based on popular music and during the night the people can enjoy themselves with the *house music* and sensual dance performed by female singers.

As it was mentioned before, *Orgen Tunggal* nowadays appears most of all in the wedding ceremony context. Its form and structure is considered simple and easy. The *Orgen Tunggal* group is composed of 6-8 people one keyboard player, two or three crew, one MC (usually a man, also a singer), and two or three female singers. The performance is divided into two parts. The first part from the morning (10:00 a.m.) until the *Magrib* time (6 p.m.) this
is the ‘day session’, the second part from the evening (8:00 p.m.) until midnight or can be until Subuh time (4.00 a.m.) this is the ‘night session’. During each session the group will take a 10-15 minutes break at prayer time.

*Orgen Tunggal* performance is outdoor entertainment and usually it takes place in front of the family’s wedding house. The stage (3 x 3 meters, 1 meter high) is decorated in a simple way. On the stage there will typically be one keyboard, amplifier, echo, equalizer, wireless microphone and one monitor. Keyboards are usually one of those made by Technics KN XXXX, e.g. KN 1000, KN 6500, and KN 7000. The type of the keyboard is a very important parameter of the quality of the group and the price of the performance. The better type gives a possibility for wider improvisation and a bigger music repertoire. On the right and the left side of the stage there are speakers. Additionally – only during the night session – there are lots of different kinds of filter lamps (including disco ball lamp).

The keyboard player, MC and the crew usually wear clean and conservative clothes (e.g. shirt with jeans). But the female singers – longing to get the attention of the audience will wear conservative clothes (e.g. *Kebaya* – traditional Indonesian costume, or maxi dress) during the day but during the night session the clothes will be totally different. They change into scanty costume which looks really striking, sexy and hot. These sexy costumes will match the music they will play.

During the day usually the group will play popular songs e.g. Indonesian pop, Minangkabau pop, *Dangdut* (a genre of Indonesian popular music that is partly derived from Arabic and Indian music), 80’s and 90’s songs (still popular among the wedding guests) and *Gamad* (a popular genre derived from traditional Minangkabau music). Besides the singers, during the day everyone can request a song and can choose the singer from the guests by writing down on the small paper the name of the person they want to sing and passing it to MC.

*House music* becomes the main music played during the night. However *house music* in Minangkabau sounds a bit different from the one that’s popular in Europe: it’s electronic but it also has a lot of influences from traditional music. In the night the singers take on the role of dancers – they dance in a very sensual and erotic way, teasing all of the men with their sexy clothes. At this time the guests (at night usually only men stay) start dancing in front of the stage – some of them go up to dance with the singers.
*Orgen Tunggal* is considered by the society as an essential part of the wedding ceremony. People believe that *if there’s no Orgen, there’s no wedding* – without *Orgen* there will be less guests attending the wedding party. And conversely – if there’s *Orgen*, the guest will have more fun and stay longer into the night.

If we’ll look deeper from an anthropological perspective at the phenomena of *Orgen Tunggal* in the Minangkabau wedding ceremony context, we can find some intriguing facts about cultural change in Minangkabau society. Because of the outdoor *Orgen Tunggal* performance, the form and structure of Baralek has deeply changed, e.g. the form of the dinner has changed from *Makan Bajamba* (indoor, sitting on the floor and eating together using only one’s hands) to *Prasmanan* (outdoor type of buffet, sitting by the tables and eating using cutlery).

As it was mentioned before, during the night session the atmosphere becomes more erotic and ‘hot’: the singers get more free and informal so do the men dancing in front of the stage. Later on – the party gets more and more naughty: erotic and sensual dance is interlaced with drunken, unbridled male behavior.

Because of the erotic aspects of the *Orgen Tunggal* performances, some part of the society disagree with putting it into the wedding ceremony context. Criticism comes usually from *Niniak Mamak* (Ethnic Leadership) and *Alim Ulama* (Ethnic Islamic Leadership) and it concerns the erotic aspects of the performance, scanty clothes, over loud music and alcohol consumption. In their opinion, some of *Orgen Tunagal* performances are breaking the basic rules of Minangkabau tradition and Islam. Especially when it comes to fights between the male guests who want to dance with the singer, caused of course by intoxication. The other problem is that children, who very often take part in that kind of evening shows.

After my two year research in this field, it was my idea to put this cultural phenomena into an academic analysis, using some of the theories that are already grounded in cultural anthropology. My observations were based on *Theory of Mass Culture* of Dwight MacDonald, William A. Haviland’s *Theory of Culture Change* and *Thick Description* of Clifford Geertz.
Analysis of *Orgen Tunggal*: Conclusion

1. *Orgen Tunggal* is one of the factors changing traditional music in Minangkabau, e.g.:
   - **Saluang** (Traditional Flute) changed into **Saluang Dangdut** (collaboration between **Saluang** and **Orgen Tunggal**). In **Saluang Dangdut** performance, the players will play **Saluang**’s songs and **Dangdut** songs.
   - **Talempong** (brass kettle instrument) becomes **Talempong Goyang** (collaboration between **Talempong** and **Combo** band – electric guitar, keyboard, bass and drums). In **Talempong Goyang** performance, the players will play **Pop Minang** songs, **Gamad** and **Dangdut** songs.

2. *Orgen Tunggal* has changed the structure of wedding ceremony, e.g.:
   - **Makan Bajamba** becomes **Prasmanan**.
   - Lack of Minangkabau traditional music in the wedding ceremony.

3. *Orgen Tunggal* is one of the factors of breaking the communication inside of the Minangkabau society e.g.:
   - Overloud *Orgen Tunggal* music makes the communication difficult between the guests.
   - The new form of a buffet forces people to sit ‘back to back’ with each other.

4. Controversial aspects of *Orgen Tunggal* give impacts on Minangkabau social life e.g.:
   - Low social status of *Orgen Tunggal* singers.
   - Dilemma between popular and traditional culture.

*note: the next page is an additional information for the main topic*
Minangkabau Wedding Ceremony

*Baralek Kawin* (Minangkabau Wedding Ceremony) is a ceremony in which cultural traditions and Islamic rules combine. Although in Islam the party after wedding is considered as an important part of the ceremony, Minangkabau people have a wedding party according to their *adat* (tradition). *Baralek* in Minangkabau is a good way to see this compromise between the matrilinear system and the patriarchal Islamic religion. This is evident during the whole process of the wedding ceremony.

First the groom’s family will propose the idea of the marriage to the bride’s family. At the same time the *Mamak* (uncle – brother of the mother) of one family will talk with the *Mamak* from the other family about how the wedding arrangements - where and when it will take place (of course this implies that both of the families agree to the wedding taking place). After that, the tradition says that the groom’s family should decorate the bedroom for the marriage couple in the bride’s family house.

Two days before the marriage, usually in the bride’s family house, the family will prepare the marriage and the wedding party. All the women from the neighborhood will come to the bride’s house to help cooking. Men from the neighborhood will help to send traditional invitations to the bride’s wider family and other guests from round the village. Young boys will help to decorate the house, and – if *Orgen Tunggal* will be part of the wedding – they will prepare the decorations for the stage. Young girls will help to decorate the bedroom. In some villages, in Minangkabau, during the preparation for the wedding the family will invite traditional music groups to perform e.g. *Randai*, *Saluang*, *Salawat Dulang*, *Talempong Pacik* and other songs. If there’s no group – the women in the kitchen usually will entertain themselves by singing and dancing.

The wedding preparation described above is based on the Minangkabau matrilinear system but during the marriage ceremony, the function of the father will appear: the agreement about the marriage will be concluded between the bride’s father and the groom. After the ceremony all of the guests will go to the bride’s house for the wedding party. At home at the same time all of the guests will pray together as a expression of gratitude to Allah. Later on the party will start: the guests will come from the morning until evening, eat dinner and congratulate the marriage couple. If there is an *Orgen Tunggal* performance, the party can last until the next morning.